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The Churches and World Peace

The Message to the Churches of the United States
from
The National Study Conference of Representatives
from Twenty-Eight Communions

Northern Baptist Convention
Southern Baptist Convention
Church of the Brethren
Christian Church
Churches of God in N. A.
Congregational Churches
Disciples of Christ
Friends (4 bodies)

Greek Orthodox Church
Mennonites (2 bodies)
Methodist Episcopal Church
Methodist Episcopal Church, South
Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.
Presbyterian Church in the U. S.
Reformed Presbyterian Church
Protestant Episcopal Church

Reformed Church in America
Reformed Church in the U. S.
Salvation Army
Seventh Day Baptist Churches
United Brethren Church
United Presbyterian Church
American Unitarian Association
Universalist Church

December 3, 1925



In every age Christians are compelled not only to voice their protest against the existing order but to point out precisely what the spirit of Christ demands and to try practically to embody it.

In this effort to interpret and apply the spirit and teaching of our Lord, the Church, it should be frankly admitted, has rendered a service whose practice has stopped far short of its ideals. It should be now ardently seeking, as it confronts present day obligations and opportunities, actually to know the mind of its Master and to do whatsoever He commands. We here have sought the truth and the inspiration by which right decisions might be reached and a program for peace be adopted which we may ask the Church to undertake with a vital faith and a conviction of victory.

War is the most colossal calamity and scourge of modern life. It is not inevitable. It is the supreme enemy of mankind. Its futility is beyond question. Its continuance is the suicide of civilization. We are determined to outlaw the whole war system. Economics and industry, social welfare and progressive civilization, morality and religion, all demand a new international order in which righteousness and justice between nations shall prevail and in which nation shall fear nation no longer, and prepare for war no more.

For the attainment of this high ideal the life of the nations must be controlled by the spirit of mutual goodwill made effective through appropriate agencies. War must be outlawed and declared a crime by international agreement. The war spirit and war feelings must be banished and war preparations abandoned. Permanent

peace based on equal justice and fair dealing for all alike, both great and small, must be achieved. The Kingdom of God in the relations of nations must be established.

This stupendous, difficult and urgent task challenges the Churches of America and all citizens of goodwill. It is a moral and religious as well as an economic and political task. All the forces of civilization must therefore unite in this noble adventure of faith and purpose.

This Study Conference, representing some thirty Communions, rejoicing in the many ringing declarations and constructive proposals by various religious bodies in their official actions, presents to the Churches of the United States of America the following Affirmations and Recommendations.

IDEALS AND ATTITUDES

The teachings and spirit of Jesus clearly show that the effective force for the safeguarding of human rights, the harmonizing of differences and the overcoming of evil is the spirit of goodwill. Throughout His entire ministry, in all human relationships, Jesus was consistently animated by this principle of active and positive goodwill in the face of opposition, governmental oppression and personal violence. He vindicated the life of love and service in the face of suffering and trial. His constant emphasis on forgiveness, the charge to His disciples to love their enemies and His prayer on the cross, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do", express and illustrate His spirit and method.

The Church, the body of Christ all-inclusive—transcending race and national divisions—should henceforth oppose war as a method of settling disputes between nations and groups, as contrary to the spirit and principles of Jesus Christ, and should declare that it will not as a Church sanction war.*

The Church should not only labor for the coming of the Kingdom of God in the hearts of men but should give itself to constructive policies and measures for world justice and peace. It should fearlessly declare its distinctive message of goodwill. It should proclaim this message regardless of fluctuating opinion and po-

litical exigencies.

The Church should teach patriotic support of the State, but should never become the agent of the Government in any activity alien to the spirit of Christ. The Church should look to the responsible statesmen of a Christian country to conduct the public business along those lines of justice and reason which will not lead to war.

The Church should recognize the right and the duty of each individual to follow the guidance of his own conscience as to whether or not he shall participate in war.

POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

1. The fundamental forces in upbuilding a Christian world order are those concrete activities which by their very nature create, as well as express, goodwill between nations and races. Let the Churches, therefore, be zealous in works of international benevolence, be friendly to the strangers in our land, and support home and foreign missionary enterprises and institutions.

2. The Churches in all lands should rise above the spirit and policies of narrow nationalism, and to this

end they should strengthen the bonds of friendship and mutual acquaintance through common activities and conferences such as that recently held at Stockholm on Life and Work.

3. In the achievement of world justice and peace the United States and other nations will have to reconsider those policies and practices that tend to create international illwill, suspicion and fear. In the enactment of legislation dealing with even domestic matters that have international consequences, each nation should

*We draw a clear distinction between the use of force in police service, domestic and international, on the one hand and in war on the other. While force involves coercion or physical control in any case, the motive and end of police force is fourfold: it is inspired by goodwill for the common welfare; it is corrective and remedial in its nature; it is exercised by neutral parties; it is strictly limited by law and has justice as its aim.

War, whether aggressive or defensive, is the use of organized violence in a dispute between nations or hostile groups. Even though one of the parties may be guiltless, it creates hatred, leads to unlimited loss of life and property, and always

involves large numbers of innocent victims. In war the parties directly concerned seek to settle the issue involved by superior force regardless of justice. Usually war involves conscription of the individual conscience and a nation-wide propaganda of falsehood, suspicion, fear and hate. This is modern war in its nature and processes, as our generation has seen it, whether the war be fought for offensive or defensive purposes. War is thus the very antithesis of police force. Attention is called to the fact that a punitive expedition undertaken by one or more nations on their own initiative is essentially a war measure and not an exercise of international police force.

practice the principle of the Golden Rule. In this connection we have especially in mind such difficult questions as

- (1) Monopolistic control of raw materials essential to modern industry and economic welfare
- (2) Regulation of immigration
- (3) Race discriminatory legislation
- (4) Investments in backward countries
- (5) Economic and social oppression of minority racial groups within a nation.

4. In harmony with the spirit of the Washington Conference on Limitation of Armament and in keeping with the declaration by President Coolidge that "peace and security are more likely to result from fair and honorable dealings . . . than by any attempt at competition in squadrons and battalions", the United States should actively cooperate with the other nations in still further reduction of armaments.

5. Plans for military expansion and increased expenditures in the Pacific are needless in themselves because of agreements already made. They are provocative of suspicion and misunderstanding on the part of other nations, and are contradictory to the affirmation of President Coolidge that "our country has definitely relinquished the old standards of dealing with other countries by terror and force and is definitely committed to the new standard of dealing with them through friendship and understanding."

6. We rejoice in the policy of our Government, adopted by the Washington Conference on Limitation of Armament, for cooperating with China in seeking the early abolition of "extraterritoriality", the adoption of "equal treaties" and the recovery of tariff autonomy. We urge the maintenance by our people and Government of such attitudes toward, and treatment of, China and of Chinese—and of all Asiatics—as are required by the principles of good neighborliness and the Golden Rule.

7. The maintenance of justice and goodwill between the peoples of the Orient and the Occident is essential to the peace of the Pacific and of the world. We of the United States, therefore, need to scrutinize with seriousness and care those acts and laws, both local and national, that are straining these relations, with a view to such modifications as will conserve the essential rights, the self-respect and the honor of both of these great branches of the one human family.

8. We believe that the United States should examine its historic policy known as the Monroe Doctrine, and seek, in cooperation with other American peoples, such a restatement of this policy as will make it a ground of goodwill between the United States and Latin America.

9. We rejoice in the condemnation of the militaristic spirit by the President in his Omaha address and record our opposition to all efforts to use the Reserve Officers' Training Corps, the Citizens' Military Training Camps and the Mobilization or Defense Test Day exercises as means of fostering the spirit of war among our citizens and especially among our youth. We approve all suitable efforts to improve the physical well-being of students in our schools and colleges, both boys and girls, but we emphatically disapprove of compulsory military training. We urge careful review of the effect of military training in all its phases.

We deplore and regard as unnecessary the proposed organization of industry under the Government in preparation for possible war. Such organization is opposed to the declaration of President Coolidge that we should demobilize intellectually as well as in the military sense. It would inevitably tend to promote the war spirit in commerce and among industrial workers.

10. Our Government, together with all other great civilized nations, should share in common agreements and in common undertakings and activities in the establishment and maintenance of the institutions essential for world justice, for the peaceful settlement of all disputes, for mutual protection of peace-loving and law abiding nations from wanton attack, and for reduction of armaments by all nations.

In this program the United States has an inescapable responsibility and an essential part. The movement for world peace cannot succeed without active participation by both the people and the government. We therefore recommend to the people of our land the following concrete measures:

- (1) Immediate entry of the United States into the Permanent Court of International Justice, with the Harding-Hughes-Coolidge reservations.
- (2) Declaration by the United States that it will accept the affirmative jurisdiction of the World Court and will submit to it every threatening dispute which the Court is competent to settle.
- (3) Full cooperation of our Government with other nations in securing the negotiation and ratification of an international treaty outlawing war as a crime under the law of nations.
- (4) Adoption by the United States of the policy of complete cooperation with all the humanitarian and other commissions and committees of the League of Nations to which commissions and committees it may be invited.
- (5) Entry of the United States into the League of Nations with the reservation that the United States will have no responsibility, moral or otherwise, for participating in the economic or military discipline of any nation, unless such participation shall have been authorized by the Congress of the United States.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. We rejoice to learn that twenty-six Communion have already formed their respective Commissions on International Goodwill and Peace and earnestly recommend to those Communion which have not yet done so the importance of taking this step at an early date.

2. We request the Executive Committee which has arranged for this Study Conference on the Churches and World Peace, with such addition to its membership as it may find desirable, to serve as a Continuation Committee with the following duties:

- (1) To secure promptly the publication of the Message to the Churches adopted by this Conference and its circulation as widely as possible among the Communion of the United States.
- (2) To invite each Communion to take such official action as it may think desirable in regard to the affirmations and recommendations of the message.
- (3) To confer with the Federal Council's Commissions on International Justice and Goodwill and on Christian Education, regarding methods of cooperation and procedure in the continuing programs of promotion and education essential to the achievement of the ends in view.

3. The achievement of permanent world peace is dependent upon the development in children and youth, through education, of convictions concerning the Fatherhood of God, the spirit and teachings of Jesus Christ, the unity of the human family, and the principles of justice; and upon the establishment of attitudes of mutual respect and reliance upon reason rather than force. We therefore recommend that the Continuation Committee, in cooperation with the various educational agencies, denominational, interdenominational and undenominational, secure the preparation of an adequate program of education for the development of these convictions and attitudes.

4. We recommend that, in the development of this program, due consideration be given to the results of recent studies of innate tendencies in human nature as well as of the molding influence of society itself upon growing life.

5. We believe it is possible to train a contemporaneous generation of children around the world to find

ways in which the gospel of goodwill can be applied to racial and international relationships. We therefore urge upon the Communion the unique responsibility for world understanding presented through their missionary relationships. To this end we suggest that the committee seek the cooperation of the missionary and other agencies in the working out of such a system of training.

6. We recommend, further, that there be recognition of the mental attitudes and social influences in present day life which tend to prevent mutual understanding and sympathetic cooperation between classes, nations, and races, and that programs of adult education and activity be prepared which shall develop relationships and attitudes which are in accord with the life and teachings of Jesus.

7. Any effective program of education for peace must be thoroughly integrated with the whole process of education. We therefore urge that close working relations be established between all the program-making educational agencies upon which the churches depend, and that the plans for peace education be worked out cooperatively.

8. We recognize the strategic position of the local church, its pastor and Christian leaders, in the program to end war, and suggest the importance of forming local committees for peace promotion and education.

9. We recommend that every City Federation or Council of Churches be urged to form its own Committee on International Justice and Goodwill, which should cooperate with the Committees in local churches in community activities and programs in the interest of world peace. We would call attention to the educational opportunities offered in connection with the observance of Armistice Day, Golden Rule Sunday, Christmas, Goodwill Day, and other anniversaries.

10. We recommend the holding of another Conference on the Churches and World Peace, when, in the judgment of the Continuation Committee, the educational program shall have been sufficiently carried out by the Churches to render such a Conference worth while.

CORRESPONDENCE MAY BE SENT TO
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